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RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #0025 0080818
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 080818Z JAN 09
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0668
INFO RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 8838
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0298

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 000025

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC KMDR KPAO TW

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S. AND CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their January 8 news coverage on the ongoing probe into former President Chen Shui-bian's legal case and on Taiwan's sagging economy. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an op-ed in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" discussed the Taiwan policy speech recently delivered by Chinese President Hu Jintao. The article said Hu has vigorously embarked on another level of political attack, with the goals of breaking the bottom line of two noes, which the United States set for Taiwan in last August, and paving the way for its ultimate reunification. End summary.

"Mona Lisa Smile of Hu Jintao"

Dr. Emerson Chang, Director of Nan Hua University's Department of International Studies, opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (1/8):

"...This article maintains that now that [Chinese President] Hu [Jintao] has achieved the three cross-Straight links and peace talks between the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party, and dealt a heavy blow against [the campaign for] Taiwan independence, he has vigorously embarked on another level of political attack with the goals of breaking the bottom line of the two noes that the United States set for Taiwan and paving the way for ultimate reunification.

The reasons are listed below:

"First, in terms of the barriers to [China's] peaceful reunification, given that the Taiwan independence force has now suffered a setback, how to deal with its relations with big nations has become Beijing's top priority. In order to solve this problem, Beijing must first break through the two noes bottom line that the United States has set for Ma Ying-jeou in dealing with cross-Straight relations -- namely, 'there should be no hint that China has sovereignty over Taiwan, and that Beijing cannot have the final say regarding any of Taiwan's activities in the international community.' To do that, in his latest definition of cross-Straight relations, Hu asserted that both sides of the Taiwan Strait are of a status of separate, rather than split governance (referring to governing power rather than sovereignty). Hu has further advocated that 'both sides of the Taiwan Strait will return to unification, which is not to restructure sovereignty or territory but to end the political confrontation.' His reason for doing so is to rule out [the possibility of] dealing with cross-Straight relations using the German or Korean models. Namely, when it comes to the ultimate resolution of the Taiwan issue, he wants to eliminate interference from external forces, that is, the model of 'restraining Taiwan via the United States.' Through direct negotiations between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, he wants to exclude the need for interference from Washington so as to achieve his so-called 'new starting point in history.' ...

"In other words, Hu may say yes to Ma's various essential requests, but for form's sake, they have to go through formal negotiations between the two sides, and formal statements must be issued so as to confirm to the international community the principal and subordinate relationship between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. His goal

is to not only pave the way for peaceful unification but also prevent Taiwan from joining hands with the United States to push for Taiwan independence after the island has succeeded in expanding its international space and acquired a peace agreement [with Beijing].

...

"Given such requests, Ma is now facing a dilemma: Namely, he will surely have to face a backlash from the United States and the Green camp should it proactively begin formal negotiations [with China]. But he will definitely be criticized by China and the Blue camp if he decides to wait passively. Since Hu has already acquired bargaining chips such as the three links, and since the U.S. government is now facing a transfer of power and the financial tsunami, Ma's card of tilting toward the United States and [being] pro-China has not generated the outcome of winning advantages from both sides as he originally expected. Instead, he is now caught in acrossfire and an awkward situation of no substance. ..." [Ed. Note:

The "two noes," defined above, were an invention that the "Liberty Times" attributed to AIT Chairman Raymond Burghardt. Chairman Burghardt never actually articulated the so-called "two noes," and the State Department has officially characterized the "Liberty Times" report on the subject as "false."

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